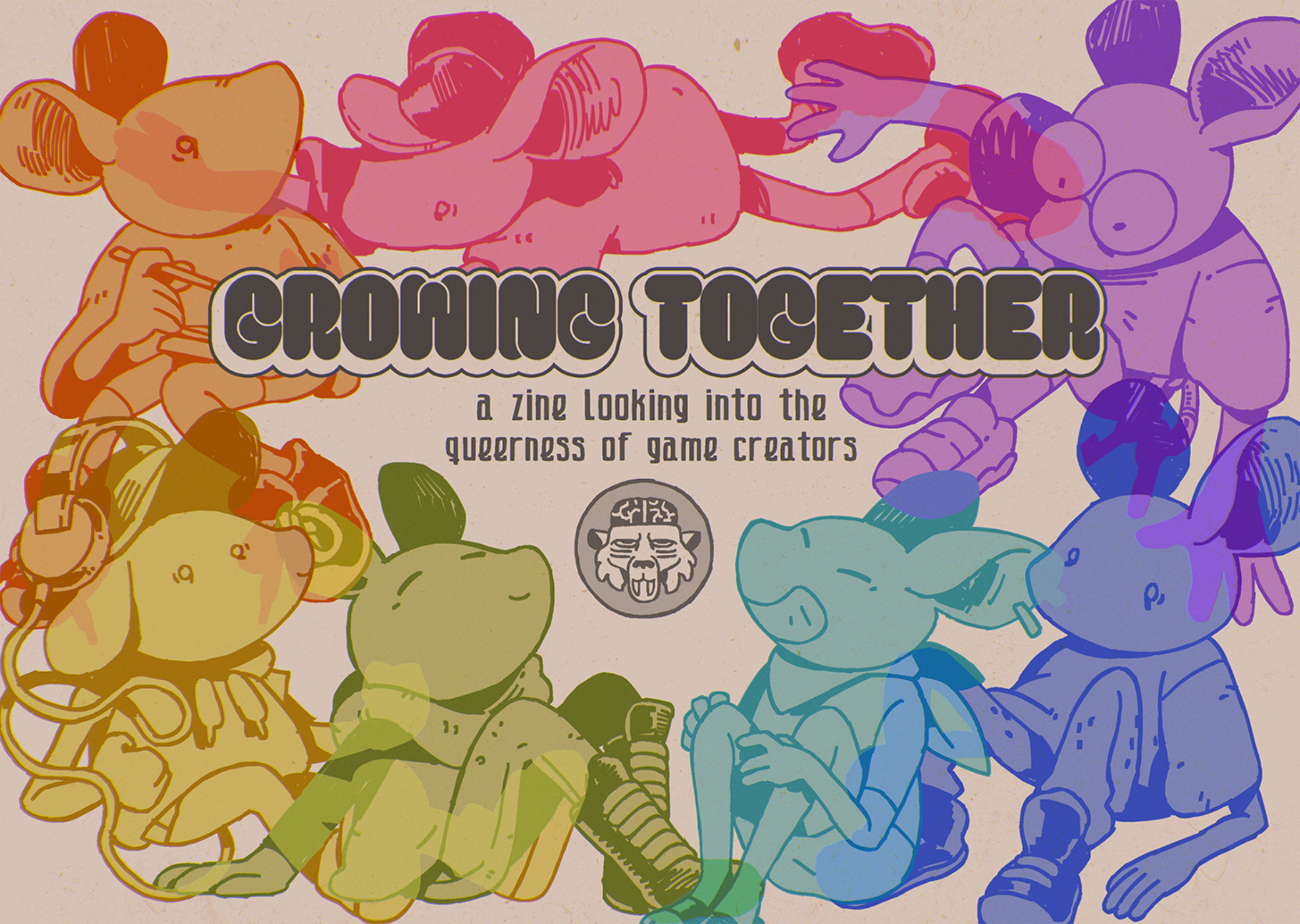




GROWING TOGETHER

a zine looking into the
queerness of game creators



Hi friends!

This is Ivan from the Brainwash Gang, I wanted to preface this zine by elaborating on why we chose this format for featuring the work of queer creators:

As a studio, we work to be active within the game dev community (focusing on a local scale), because we believe that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere ourselves without it. On our own none of us is the best or the most experienced at our respective fields, but our friends and industry colleagues have helped us with everything we've struggled with.

When we approached making something for Pride featuring queer game makers, we didn't want to make the usual twitter thread highlighting the same few games and creators that pop up every year in social media. Don't get us wrong, we really appreciate the work that's put into them! But since community has been so important for us as a studio, we thought that we could add to the conversation by asking queer developers questions about their creative journeys that we'd actually find helpful and interesting hearing their answers to.

After all, right now it's easier than ever to DM someone and ask them about their experience with a publisher or technical questions, but asking them more personal questions about their creative journeys is still a little awkward.

With this in mind, the questions we asked openly on twitter to any queer developer that'd want to get featured on this zine on June of 2022 were:

 How does your queerness seep into your work? 

 What stuff has helped with existing as a queer person 
in the gamedev community?

Since everyone is answering the same two questions, each person's answers will go after its respective emoji.

These questions have been crafted with the perspective of the queer members of Brainwash Gang for the purpose of this zine, but we'd also care to know the answer members of other marginalized backgrounds would have to similar questions. Disabled, POC, people with working class backgrounds (for example) face similar issues, the last group having an specially tough time getting into such a classist hypercapitalist industry.

As more experienced people have told us: nurturing open source software, creating and moderating small safe spaces, and listening to the voices of marginalized developers are all things we can do to try to make things better. Let's work together and continue to ask each other for help when needed ^w^)/

Best wishes from the Gang, we hope you enjoy this zine featuring the voices and work of queer developers!



Lily Valeen
@ItsMeLilyV



Queerness seeps into what I make in a lot of ways: explicitly queer characters and stories, sure, but also, I hope my work can be motivation to push back against unquestioned assumptions & authority, and can inspire people going through both high & low moments in our world.

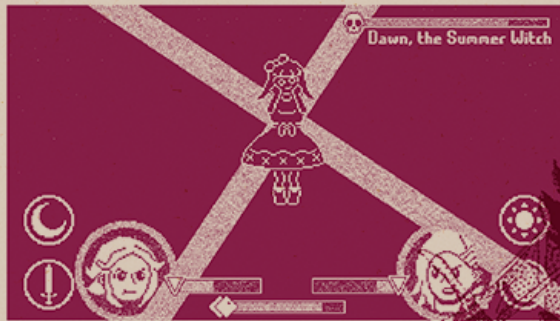


Lily Valeen
@ItsMeLilyV



I've found a number of gamedev communities that have been incredibly friendly to queer folks, but it takes effort.

The internet has been great for that; the relationships I've made w/ other queer devs over the world has been a motivator and lead to some great collaborations!



Lily makes games as Lilycore Games, a one-woman indie game studio making lightning-fast action games about queer women. Her webpage is lilycoregames.com and she's currently developing a lesbian romance boss rush game called BOSSGAME: The Final Boss Is My Heart.



* Dre Otero *
@notaltright_



I'm a very character and story driven person, so I naturally design and explore those with a queer eye. It also hapened to help me deepen on my queerness.

♥ I unexpectedly found a lot of queer people on the indie community which I had troubling doing so outside of it.



Dre Otero is an illustrator and game artist from Galiza, Spain They've worked on Manita's Kitchen (manitaskitchen.itch.io) in which you play as a cute T-rex struggling at making pizza





Claris CyArron 🇬🇧 Glitchhikers out NOW
@Cyarron

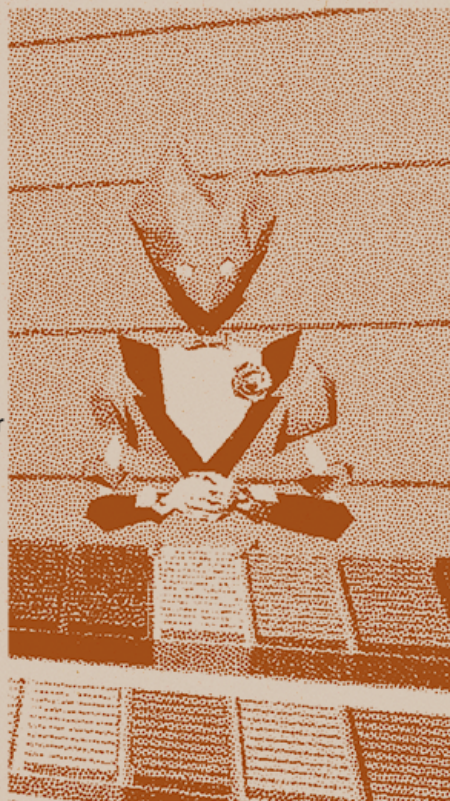
🌈 (1/2) While working on "Glitchhikers: The Spaces Between" I thought a lot about how games might hold space for queer healing, reflection, & restoration. The game could be welcoming a player on a journey of self discovery, giving them time to "sit with" parts of themselves...

🌈 (2/2) Or Glitchhikers could be welcoming an exhausted activist spread thin by volunteering on 2 boards, who needs calm but also to reflect & remind themselves why their efforts matter. Perhaps it's neither, or both. There's plenty of ways for players to tailor the experience

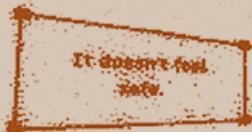


Claris CyArron 🇬🇧 Glitchhikers out NOW
@Cyarron

💖 Knowing there are so many queer devs, & that the number keeps growing, fills me with encouragement. But finding queer activist outlets outside of games in my local communities has been essential, too. Don't let your connection to community be entirely mediated by tech corps!



Claris is a Narrative Designer at Silverstring Media, a videogame studio that released the surreal Glitchhikers: The Spaces Between and who have worked as consultants on multiple other projects.



@HIKER

"There is room for you to fill that space with *your* life, with *your moments*. Take up space. Live, and be who you are—there's room for you, too."



I think it kind of oozes in subconsciously at all levels. I think, in my music work, trying to focus a light in my mixes or orchestration on elements that usually don't get as much of a focus is pretty queer.

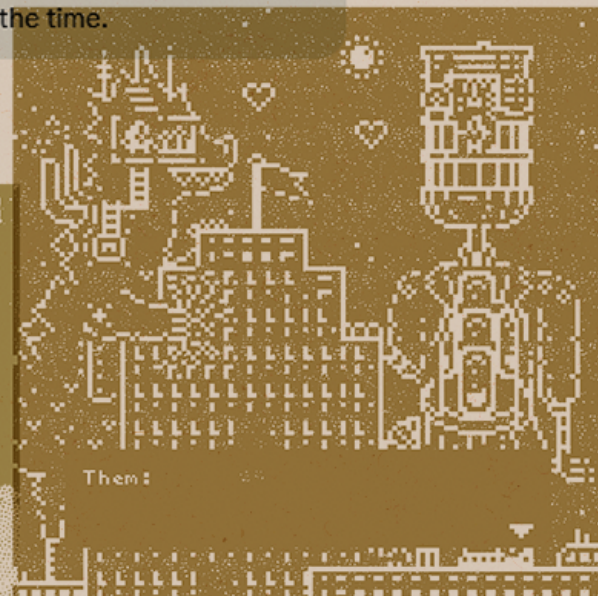


It's helped me see so many other queer people succeeding while being loudly themselves. I'm very thankful to those who've come before me to take at least some of the burden off of feeling like your forging ahead into new territory all the time.



Josie Brechner 🌸🔪

@visagermusic



Josie is a composer, sound designer, and technical implementer for games and more. You can see all her credits in her website josiebrechner.com, where she also features her talks, personal projects and tools



Emi
@emimonerrate

Used to work environments where queerness was not valued, I incorporated lgbt elements in sneaky ways, referencing queer media or being ambiguous about things. I still enjoy including that content when it feels rebellious/out of place, but I'm trying to be more explicit too.



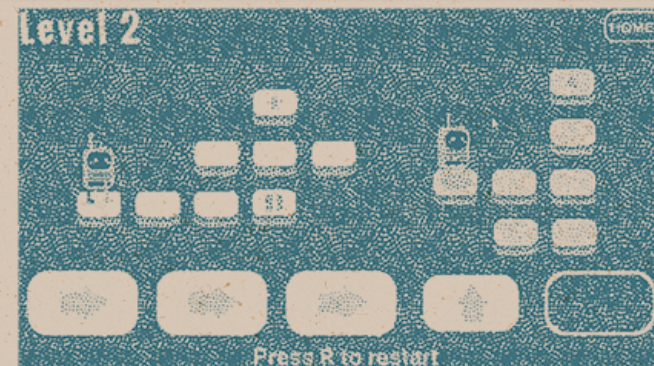
Emi
@emimonerrate

♥ I didn't realize I had a safe space to belong until I got to know other queer devs and saw them express their identity loudly and creatively. It ended up being the best starting point to begin connecting with others though my work on deeper, more vulnerable and honest ways.



Emi is a pixel artist and illustrator from Spain working on his own projects like Tomotama.

We strongly encourage you to follow him on twitter, as he drops really elaborate & cool pixel art gifs from time to time!



Mx Robin
@Chaotic_Logi5

My queerness determines the lens in which I view the world, and so colours the art I make whether I realise or not. I think my works varies and bounces around in a lot of colourful ways, and I've found pride in that. Pretty much as soon as I came out as trans I found my

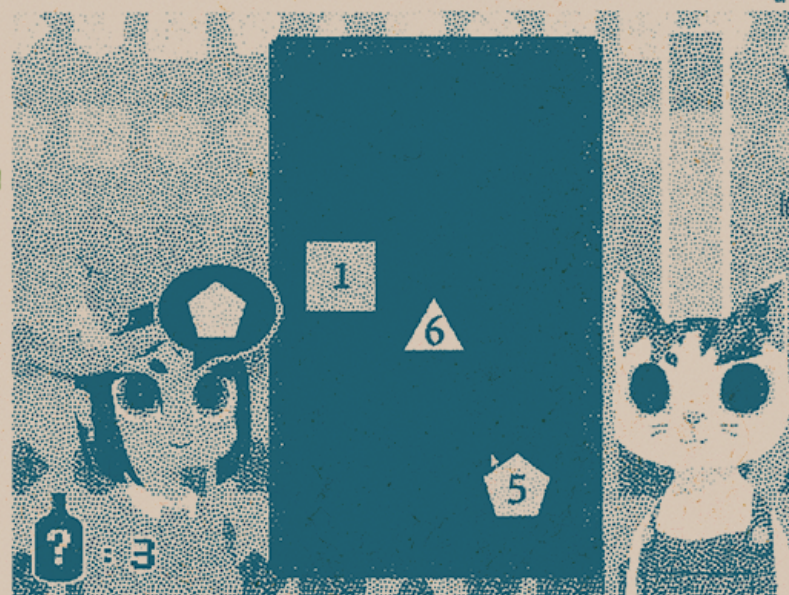
Voice & footing in my own games. My self assuredness and joy naturally comes into my work



Mx Robin
@Chaotic_Logi5

♥ For the second question, I'd say having queer indie creators who's work I enjoy, and connecting with their work, as well as having good friends who are queer creators too. It makes me-
Feel grounded and taught me how to share joy as well as hardship.

Robin is a British - Sri-Lankan technical game designer and generalist game programmer. You can check out his games and see his showreel at logicallychaotic.itch.io





The goblin queen 🌈
@TheKreat0r

(1/2) 🌈 As a character designer, it helped me with variety in bodytypes and in general. I like to think that when i draw, for example, a fem character with bodyhair, i'm helping someone else to feel better about having it



The goblin queen 🌈
@TheKreat0r

(2/2) ❤️ LGBT+ spaces and servers made for us! as a junior and as (shy)introvert i struggle with making conections and friends, it helps me feel less lonely.

Carlota is a 2d artist based on Spain.
Her work is colorful and unique, and you can check it out at herartstation.com/theKreat0r



Mad Gear Games
@MadGearGames

The LGBT+ faction of Mad Gear speaking :)

🌈 Making games with furies is not related, is it? ^^
Actually, we are now working on a game exploring our queerness.

❤️ The sad truth is "passing".

(note for the reader: "passing" refers to not being percieved as queer in your regular life. It is a complex issue often discussed in lgbt+ spaces)

The studio madgeargames.com focuses on old school 2D games, their latest game being Kemono Heroes.

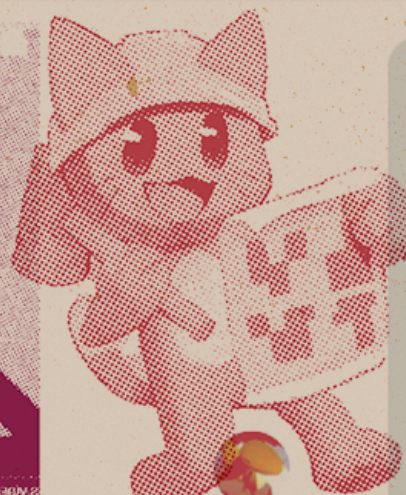
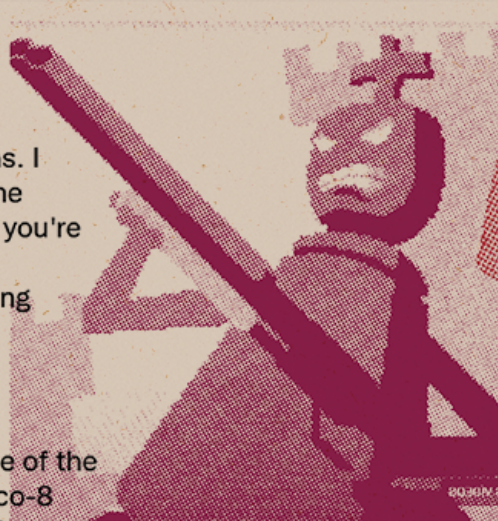




My queerness translates into radical decisions. I always try to do things in unique ways, to push the boundaries of what gets made. I think that when you're used to feeling outside the norms, it's easier to question the norms and break them in new exciting ways.



I kindof landed directly into the queerer side of the gamedev community from the start with my Pico-8 work. I didn't identify as queer then, but over the years existing in the community opened my eyes and helped me understand and affirm myself. I am SO grateful for that.



Mau
@SamberoDev

In my games, every character is queer unless explicitly stated. I'd like to make stuff that my younger self would have loved, and sometimes that's as easy as making ANYTHING with at least one relatable character. Anything that would have made me feel normal.

The gamedev community is as diverse as inclusive, and you feel safe there since there's a general rejection to hateful people and media. I feel so glad I can be a part of this. It gives me hope for the future of games and also for the future in general!

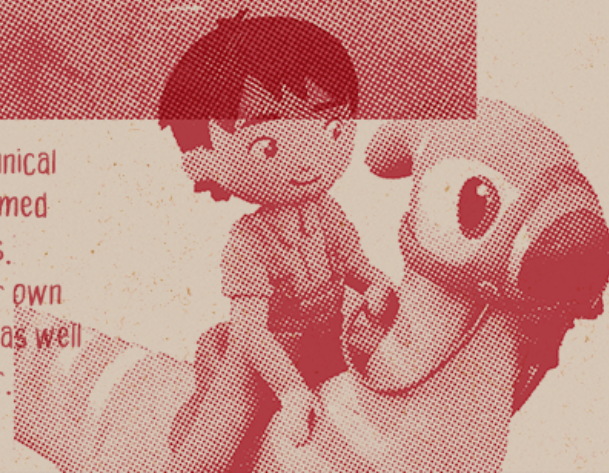
SUGAR

Rémy is 33% of PUNKCAKE Délicieux, a gamedev collective that releases a game a month.

Rémy's work centers on experimental colorful graphics and mechanics with their own engine, SUGAR.



Sambero is working as a technical designer at the Dinosaur themed ranching game Paleo Pines. They are also working on their own personal games at vila6.itch.io, as well as in the game Kitty Builder.





SOL 🌈🔒
@mnsoleart

🌈 I seek experiences & imagery outside of the social binary convention. I guess that's partly why I do environments! I love the mysterious, violent, and non-human, because then I can tell stories where gender/sexuality are impossible to discern.



SOL 🌈🔒
@mnsoleart

💖 Beyond worker solidarity, communities that do intersectional/anti-racist work is where I've felt the safest, & where I've learnt how to be a better community organizer + ally for other marginalized people. Learning accountability, compassion, and direct action is where it's at!

Sol self-describes as an environmental storyteller. You can find their personal work at mnsoleart.itch.io, and we encourage you to check out his experimental interactive diorama GUACUCO.



My queerness has always heavily influenced my art even when I didn't know exactly why. I've always preferred androgynous or non-human characters in media and my own work, or designed aliens and try to justify as much as possible why their gender is different. Now I feel no need to justify myself anymore and this changed how I do art somewhat, but honestly not that much.



I began to come out to the world when I began to meet lgbt+ people and allies, inside a gamedev space. I'm lucky to have met these friends then and to now be in a work environment with many other queer devs.

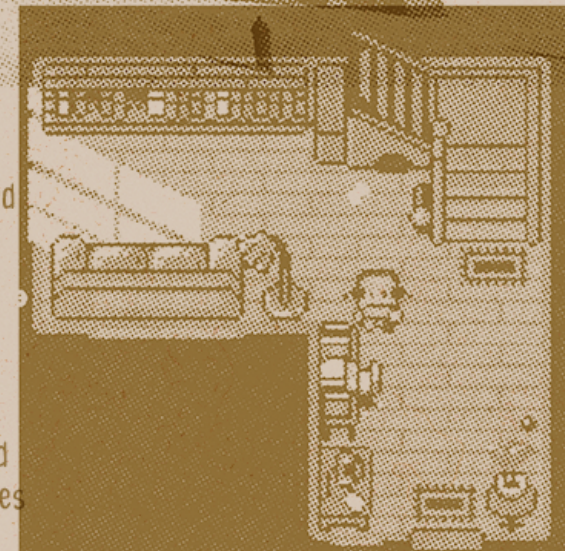


Rha



Remi has worked as a 3D artist in Summer in Mara and is currently working at Codigames.

You can find them on their instagram [@thealienram](https://www.instagram.com/thealienram), where along with their personal games they upload super cool handmade figurines





I went hard on anthro characters when I decided to make my work loudly queer and personal, and they have been the catalyst of my self-expression. I can comfortably talk about what compassion looks through queer lenses if a dog-person stands between me and the player



It helps talking with other creators concerned with changing the ways we make games. When I know others work to make this industry more responsible (for the people working in it and the planet) and community-based I don't fall into a doomer mindset of "I won't survive here".

Ivan is a member of Brainwash Gang making game art and illustrations, who also works on his own personal games and zines at ivanpapiol.itch.io



owof games - "non-binary" is out!
@OwofGames

How does your queerness seep into your work?

For us it's about the openness and vulnerability that comes with bringing our own lived experiences into a game, to talk about what we really care about.



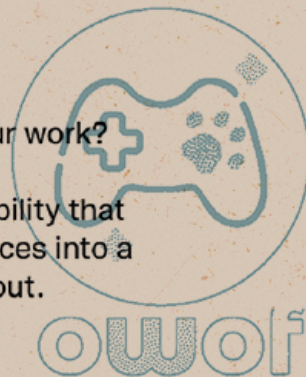
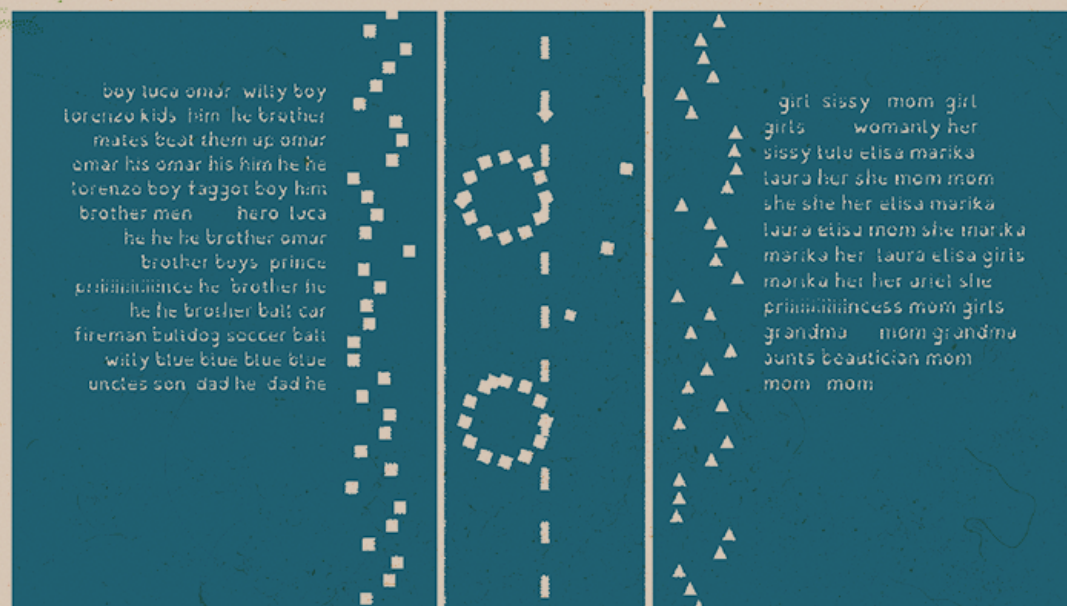
owof games - "non-binary" is out!
@OwofGames

What stuff has helped with existing as a queer person in the gamedev community?

Putting the transgender experience at the center of our first game has helped us in creating a network of queer creators around us, and a welcoming environment to discuss and play.

owof games describe themselves as a small studio designing games from the margins.

Their latest game, a storytelling/bullethell mix about the non-binary experience can be found on their owofgames.itch.io.



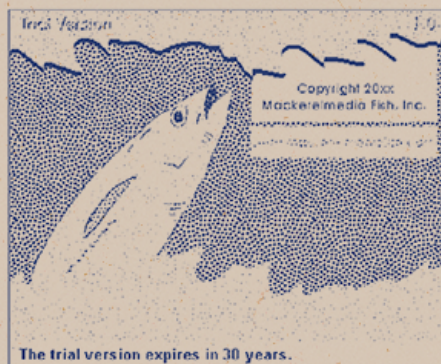
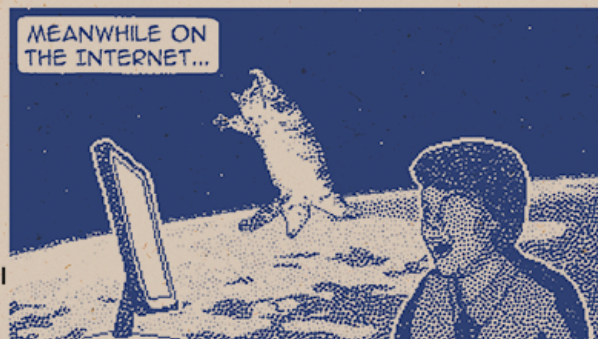


Nathalie Lawhead
@alienmelon

Embracing my queerness made me much more confident about exploring my weird, strange, or colorful art. I'm not ashamed of how "different" my work is anymore. It's weird to look back at that. It's almost like another lifetime... 1/5

I used to think something is wrong with me because I just could not be normal (as a person, or an artist)... Fitting in made me miserable... way too much time went into trying to "fit in" then feeling bad about not doing it right. Whatever "normal" even means lol. 2/5

Before I learned that things like trans and non-binary are real things, the feeling of "something missing" or "something is wrong with me" held me back a lot. That translated into my relationship with the art I make. 3/5



Nathalie Lawhead
@alienmelon

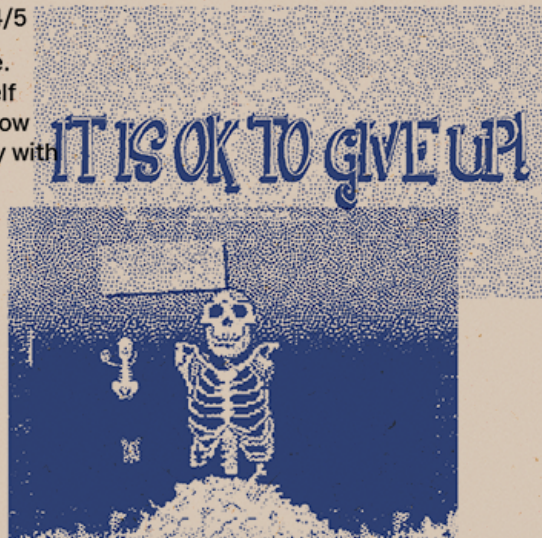
One of the first game events I went to, loooooong time ago, introduced me to this colorful vibrant space of people... The queer games part of the festival. I had no idea these things existed. It was so liberating... Everyone was just... THERE and themselves :O 4/5

I feel like these experiences set my own work free. Maybe it's cliché to say, but I learned about myself from these games. It's amazing and liberating. I now hope to be able to make others feel the same way with my own stuff too. 5/5

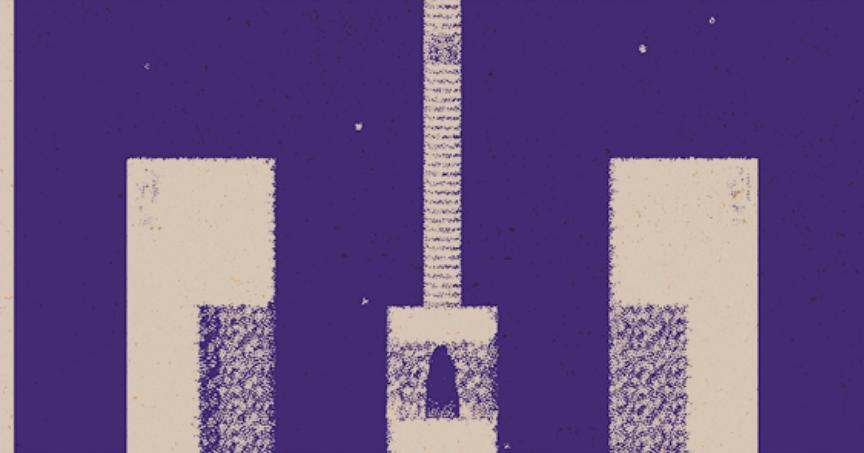
From their Electric Zine Maker to projects like Tetrageddon and Everything is going to be OK, Alienmelon's style is a bouncy spectacle of messing with html, and a referent for digital experimental spaces. Just walking around their webpage unicornycopia.com is quite an experience.

Fresh
freeware

(We also recommend visiting their nathalielawhead.com/candybox/, where they publish articles on their thoughts on creativity stuff from time to time.)



A3 Aaron's
Awesome
(it's a lust)



Tefas de Tita
@Marron121

Most (if not all) my characters deviate from the cisstraight, but even when my plots are not about their gender & sexuality I often tend to think how those parts of themselves affect how they work around the plot and its themes.



Tefas de Tita
@Marron121

Knowing that I'm not alone, and that there are other queer people working on games too.

Aaron is a programmer and narrative designer based in Spain, you can take a look at his projects at aaronmirandagomez.weebly.com. He also recently organized the A3 Aaron's Awesome festival, a fun informal event that highlighted small spanish-speaking games in his community.



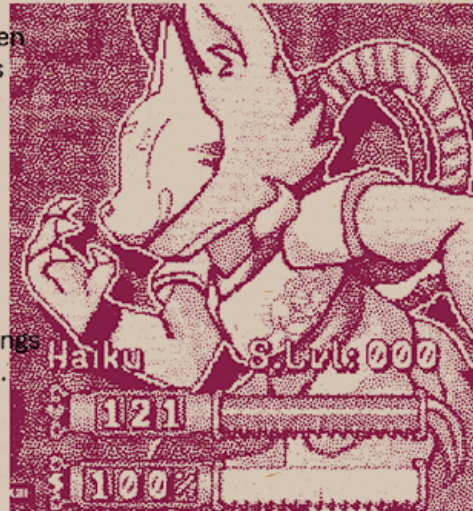


Sundial ... Making SOMETHING RPG!
@SundialShark

I can't say I've run into anything that has had any effect on me personally yet since I haven't really been comfortable enough to talk about myself, but it gets into my works anyway since my characters are my babies and they deserve to be world where they're welcomed.

Sundial ... Making SOMETHING RPG!
@SundialShark

It's really helped with shaping up a believable character. Often do I find myself projecting my feelings onto them and my main protagonist is no exception.



Sundial is a game development studio based in Seattle. They're currently making Somewhen, a retro inspired RPG that you can check out on sundialshark.itch.io/somewhen



Rachel Morgan
@HexraeCasts

Rachel Morgan
@HexraeCasts

How does your queerness seep into your work?

It's inseparable. Everything we make is part of our drive to exist, fully and unapologetically. To share ourselves. To find and connect with others like us. To voice what we, and so many others like us, feel.

What stuff has helped with existing as a queer person in the gamedev community?

Finding other queer artists was the biggest help by far. Knowing that we weren't just begrudgingly tolerated, but welcomed. Being able to talk with others, to see hope where others had succeeded.



Rachel Morgan is a Industrial/Ambience composer and videogames writer of hunting stories.

It's webpage is hexrae.com, where you can also find her personal games.





For the major part of my life, I have actively avoided queerness in order to fit in my family. It's been creative work, and especially, creative people, what made me feel valid. I feel like I have always taken from them, and barely offered anything from me in my work...

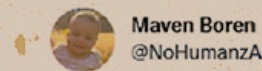
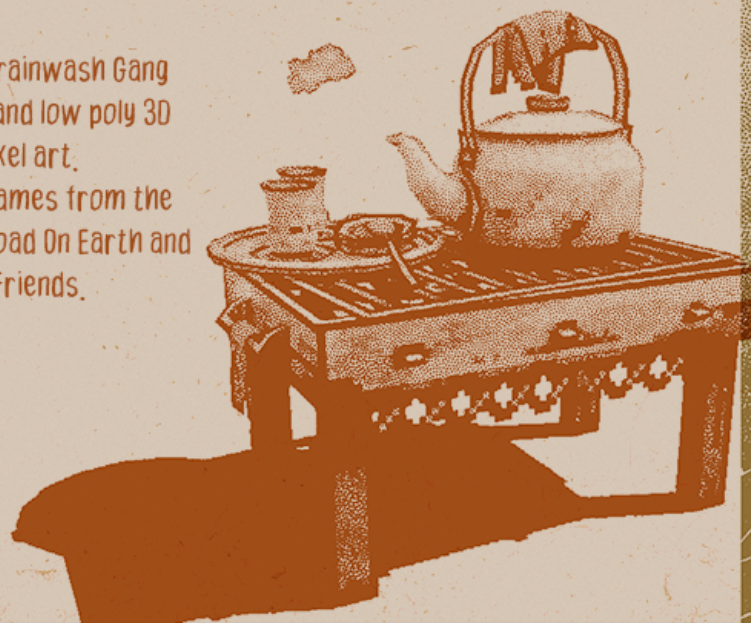


I believe though, this is a slow process, and I will be able to offer more in the future, or at least I hope so!

♥ As for what helped me exist in the gamedev community? Probably my people, strong support groups where you don't feel an alien 🐼



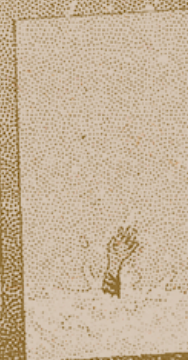
Bakir is a member of Brainwash Gang specialized in pixel art and low poly 3D merged with pixel art. Their mark is all over games from the studio like The Longest Road On Earth and Friends Versus Friends.

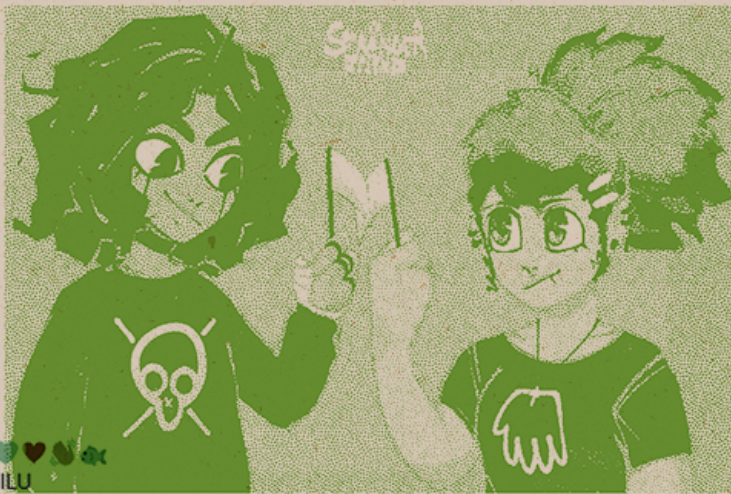


it's in all aspects. It's hard to remove being black and queer from my work.

♥ just talking to other queer bipoc people. There isn't a lot of support in the community so we have to make it ourselves

Maven makes both games and a LGBT+ manga-inspired webcomic called AlterXArtifact. They're currently working on a game called Freyr, and you can follow its development on their patreon @NoHumansAllowed





Legend 
@LegendILLU

 The protagonists of my game are explicitly queer and trans while the antagonist are capitalism and the church

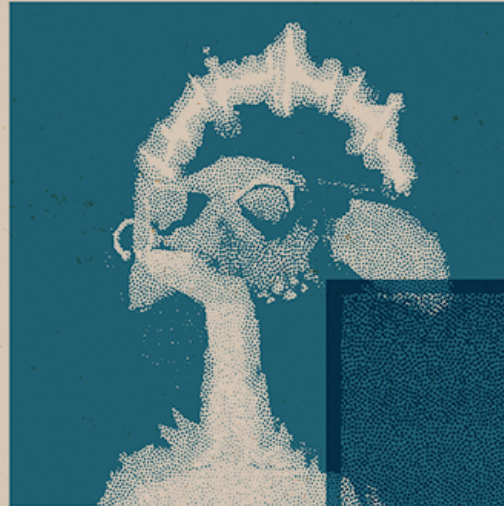
 Queerness is a common theme of my favorite indie games and the community which helps gives me the confidence to include it in my work

Legend is an artist and gamedev based in United States.
You can check out their work at legendthelegend.tumblr.com



Killian
@nightframes_

 I like using anthro and cryptid characters in my work, be it gamedev or art. I think that for some reason, it makes way easier to express or convey certain (explicit or not) aspects of being queer, specially outside binary expectations.



Killian is an illustrator and gamedev who self-describes as the world's least underground underground dev. In nightframes.tumblr.com you can find their latest illustrations.



V -

🌈 A lot of my games tend to wear queerness on their sleeves. Generally, I find it a lot easier to either have the conflict be unrelated to queerness, or have the queer side to the conflict be subtextual.

💖 I feel like housing/financial stability has been the main factor; it's kind of startling how hard it had been to finish projects and learn skills without the safety net I have now.

Hellworld Lover has answered as both of their members, Volition and Reina.

Their game is a Visual Novel about dating monsters at the end of the world, and they mostly post their progress on their twitter account



R

🌈 I've not made any queer games prior to Hellworld Lover. Hellworld Lover is my 1st and only Queer game I'm making with @VolitionNewlove. So far the biggest change in working on this has been me being more mindful about using neo pronouns and they/them generally.

Adding Queerness in our game changes drastically how I imagine and create the overall fictional lifestyle of each character. Suddenly we're just not bound to society's cis straight expectations and that opens a lot of doors to how we can reimagine queerness physically- and visually in characters and the environment in-game. I feel like it's a big step considering how I'm from a very religious & conservative country like Malaysia who's citizens are probabyl 70% to 80% unaware of pronouns outside of she/he.

💖 Being given all the time to work on the game plus loose deadlines has helped me to process ideas and creations better. Deciding a character's gender and visuals gets rather exciting, cause Queerness can look like anything 💚-

Creating game art is one of the few ways my Queerness can really shine, cause I can't do that with how I present myself in public as that could put me in an unsafe environment.



A Brainwash Gang Zine